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GREETINGS TO THE WORLD FROM THE NEW LIBERAL CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY IN MEXICO¹

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York of the Liberal Constitutional Government of Mexico*

I have been kindly invited by Clark University to speak the thoughts of my fellow citizens, of the Liberal Constitutional Government which I have the honor to represent as Commercial Agent in New York, before this audience of intellectual men and women.

Were I speaking to an ordinary audience I would begin by recounting something of Mexican history; I would tell you something of the Aztec Indians and the Spanish conquerors; I would place before your imagination the wonderful landscapes of the Mexican mountain and plateau so as to set a background for my address. Such an exordium is not necessary; you are all well acquainted with those details. You know also the Mexican psychology; you know that we are not fundamentally different from other peoples; that we have virtues and defects, that we have in Mexico good men and bad men, just as in any other country. You do not belong to that class of men who, when they read that a crime has been committed beyond the Rio Grande, at once brand as criminal the whole nation. You understand, because you have studied history, that the mere existence of a bad government does not mean that the people afflicted by that misfortune is a bad people; you know that

¹An address delivered at the Clark University Conference on Mexico and the Caribbean, May 21, 1920.

sooner or later that people will react and will overthrow such obstacles as may stand in its way. You all know that such misfortunes as occasional bad government are apt to exist anywhere; yet we all know and believe that in the end, whatever be the immediate trend of events, justice and righteousness will prevail.

Mexico is evolving from an epoch of darkness. Experience has opened the eyes of the people; sufferings and hardships have shown us the straight road toward progress; and if we have overthrown an objectionable régime, it is because we knew that it was moving in the wrong direction; that it had stepped aside from the path of justice and the right interpretation of the national ideals.

Long ago, when the Spanish "encomenderos," who were some of them practically slave drivers, herded the poor Aztec Indians, beating them in order to derive from their sufferings as much profit as possible, regardless of their anguish and fatigue, those unfortunate Indians had but two words to answer, two words in their wonderful language, full of bitterness and dignity: "Ni tlaca," which means, "We are also human."

Mexico has for a long time been made the target for many malicious blows. The faults of its presidents and the crimes of its outlaws have been regarded as characteristic of every Mexican; Mexico has been for a long time at bay; yet we believe that Mexicans are entitled to a fair trial, that we are entitled to be judged impartially and justly by those who know us: we are also human.

You Americans in the United States ask yourselves why it is that the elections being so near, scheduled to take place this coming month of July, we Mexicans could not wait for them in order to settle our differences through the ballot. But I would ask you what you would do, if one of your presidents showed that he was planning to manipulate the elections in favor of a candidate of his own choice, quite unknown to the people, because that candidate had offered to become a blind tool in his hands; if this man in order to carry out that plan intended to send troops into some of the states and even to overthrow the legal governor

of one of them; if he were to use all the power which the people had vested in him, and the funds belonging to the nation, in order to support his unpopular candidate, and at the same time set every sort of obstacle in the way of the other candidates; if you saw your country provoking the enmity of all other countries without accomplishing anything for the welfare of your own people; and if you understood that the coming election was to be merely a farce through which such a dishonest régime would perpetuate itself in power. Facing this situation, if you knew that you could not resort to the ballot, would you not then resort to bullets?

Unfortunately, that was the situation in Mexico.

Now you might ask: "How are we to know that this new government will afford adequate guarantees and justice? All revolutions have started with wonderful promises which were never fulfilled." To a certain extent that is true; but the present case is different. This popular movement which in so short a time has come to control the whole country, has been started, has gone on, and has won its goal without having offered any glowing promises; still it has fulfilled practically every hope. Even during the period of fighting life and property has been respected, no trespasses committed, no injuries inflicted upon anyone, no revenge satisfied. All have been afforded adequate guarantees, foreigners as well as nationals. It is not a logical consequence that such a movement deserves confidence? Is it not merely common sense to believe in results after they have been accomplished?

The American people have greeted with hope and sympathy a new Mexico. We have seen the favorable impression which the fall of the Carranza régime has caused; this sympathy is due to the fact that it was chiefly the Carranza régime as was well known, which has made impossible a real and true friendship between our two countries. Both the American and the Mexican peoples wish to become friends, to work in coöperation; but this result has been prevented by lack of mutual understanding; you, as well as we, have nearly always intrusted the task of settling our

differences to men who knew little, if anything, of the other country. I hope that in the future this will be otherwise, because I am perfectly confident that if Mexicans who know you, and Americans who know us, were allowed to arrange those so-called conflicts, they simply could not exist. There are no conflicts between both peoples. They have been many conflicts between men, Americans and Mexicans, whose duty it was to have avoided them.

We young men of Mexico, as well as all those who know the United States, have realized that, unless foreign capital and immigration be encouraged to go into our country and develop its natural resources, those resources will be lost to the world. Those who are willing to come to us, bringing with them the necessary capital to help themselves by helping us to develop our lands, our mines and our other natural resources, will not go into and settle in a country in which they are not properly protected by the laws. We know how the United States has been developed by foreign capital and immigration, because foreign investors and settlers found a country which received them with open arms and with just laws. We realize that our country has immense treasures which are waiting for the hands that are to make them useful to mankind; we realize that we need aid from outside, from the whole world, since no country has ever advanced by its own power when inclosed within an impassable wall, the existence of which the world has a right to forbid.

Therefore, the laws that we intend to uphold will protect foreign capital and immigration, so far as this may be done in accordance with the eternal principles of justice and equity.

We young men of Mexico who have had the benefit of observing the consequences that past mistakes have brought to our people, intend, in order to accomplish a truly patriotic work, to give especial attention to the education of the Indians who form the greatest part of the present population of Mexico. So far the governments of Mexico have forgotten the Indians, some of whom, to be sure, have risen from their former status, and made a name for themselves,

but the great majority of whom are still in much the same condition as their ancestors, prevented from amounting to anything because of their continuing ignorance.

Indians have been accused of being a turbulent race; they are not so. They are peaceful, but they are easily misled by anyone who offers to better their sad condition. Now we mean to better it, and to do it not by giving them arms, but by giving them schools and books.

The Liberal Constitutionalist government comes to you with open arms. All the leaders of the revolution have spoken to the American people asking their friendship and coöperation which we know you are willing to give. General Obregón, prominent among those leaders, has said:

My ideal for the relations between Mexico and the United States is to make the international border like the Canadian boundary, withdrawing troops, except customs officials.

Carranza's interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine was a mistake, although I believe Carranza was perfectly sincere in the belief that his policy was best for Mexico.

Further, I will quote a message from Mr. Adolfo de la Huerta, Provisional President of the new government, which was dated the thirteenth of May:

I beg to ask you to inform the government of the United States of America that we have given complete guarantees to natives and foreigners not only in this state, but by all civil and military authorities therein. The present government of Mexico will also maintain the firm purpose of following the same line of conduct by giving necessary and ample guarantees to the foreign capital that may be invested in this Republic in conformity with our laws.

Our government is also well disposed to develop relations with the United States, in conformity with the rules of international law and with the standards of absolute justice, equity and good faith.

We mean to banish hatred, that obstacle which stands in the way of mankind; we intend to create love and friendship through mutual understanding; we wish you to go to Mexico, to know us, to become acquainted with the real Mexican people. We also wish all Mexicans to go back to their country. We have eliminated the word "exiles;"

they are no longer exiled from Mexico. We have even banished the word "amnesty" because it means pardon. During our long and bitter struggle for freedom and democracy, some Mexicans have been mistaken, some misled; they were honest and sincere in their opinion; they need no pardon; they are guilty of no offense; Mexico is their country, and the doors are open to them. We wish the coöperation of every honest man.

The question has been raised whether the new Government will uphold the Constitution of 1917 or that of 1857. What I can assure you and the world is that Mexico will maintain laws which will satisfy and protect every legal right, every legitimate enterprise, laws which will encourage foreign capital to go into Mexico and to help us to develop our natural resources, laws against which no objection can be justly taken.

General Alvarado, now Minister of Finance, alluding to the thoughts of the new Government said:

We know that we have to guarantee the lives and properties of nationals and foreigners. We know that we have to pay our debts as gentlemen. We know that the difficulties of Mexico affect many parts of the world.

And because we are conscious of our situation and of our responsibilities, we wish to make gigantic efforts to comply with our duties, not to be run over as a hindrance, not to be regarded as a troublesome neighbor, but as a useful and excellent friend always ready to coöperate in every effort to advance civilization.

We Mexicans of today, through our progressive young men, do not ask more of the world than a little patience and a little faith in our ability to solve and arrange our affairs.

Have faith in our sincerity and in our latent forces, and you will not repent.

You have heard the words of those who are leading this movement, words which unquestionably inspire confidence; you have seen how national protest has eradicated a régime which failed to interpret the real will of a people anxious for peace and order; you have observed their conduct. We have indeed gained favor in the eyes of the world, to which, in the name of the new government of Mexico, and through the kindness of this most distinguished audience, I offer our very sincere greetings.